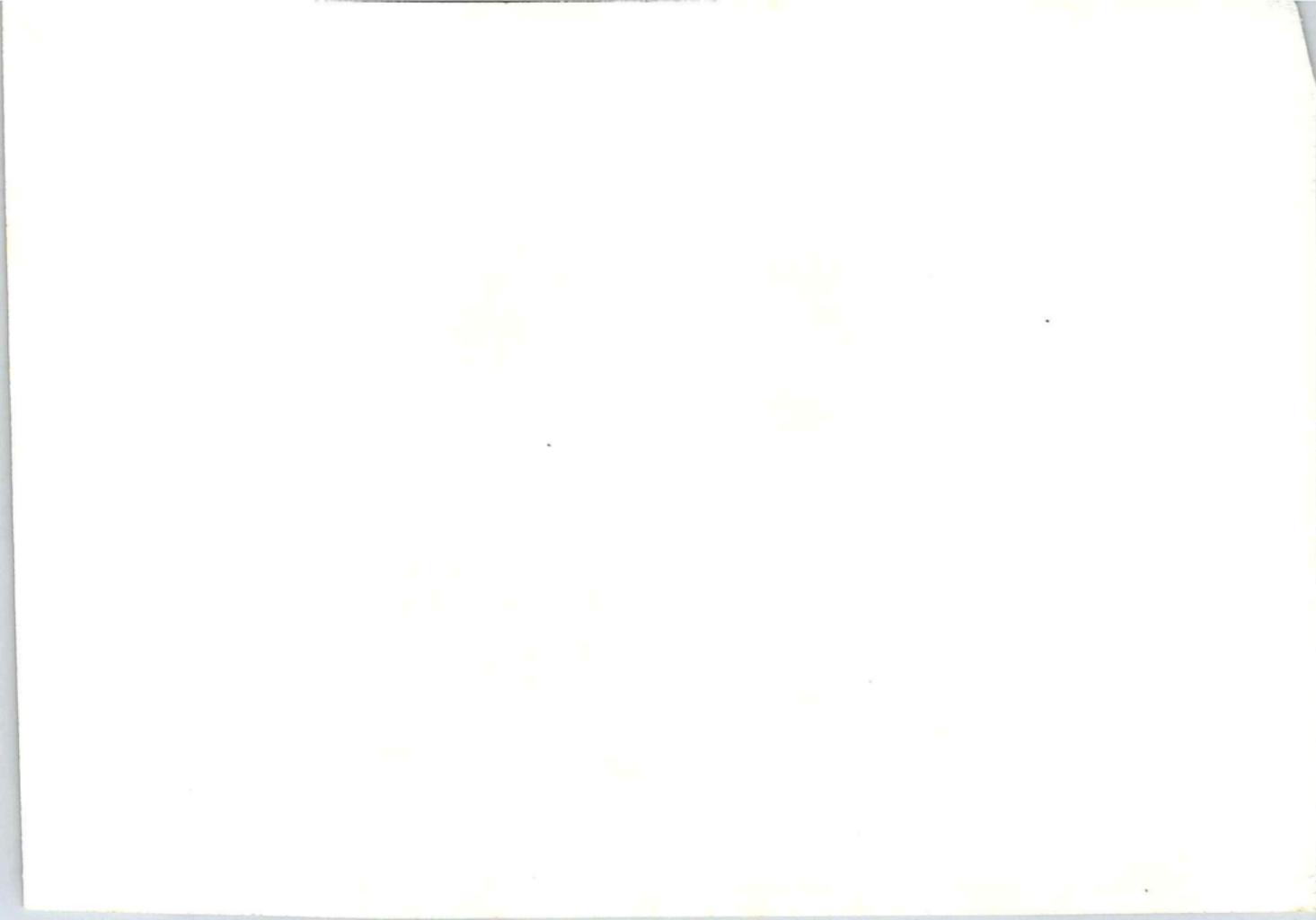


adoption

QUESTIONS TO
ASK YOURSELVES





QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELVES

This is the second in a series of pamphlets about adoption and is designed for people who are thinking of inquiring further about adopting a child.

You may soon be having an interview with a Child Welfare social worker and, as it isn't easy to answer all sorts of personal questions about yourselves, it is hoped that this pamphlet will be of help to you in thinking about some of the more important ones. The questions do not have right or wrong answers. They are asked to help you and the social worker arrive at the best decision for the child and yourselves.

ARE YOU BOTH SURE YOU WANT TO ADOPT A CHILD?

Adoption is a joint venture. Unless you are both quite certain that you want to adopt a child, it cannot work.

● IF UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN—HAVE YOU HAD MEDICAL ADVICE?

If your main reason for considering adoption is that you think you are unable to have your own children, it may be as well for you to seek medical advice before coming to this conclusion. Much can be done these days to overcome infertility.

- **ARE YOU OF AN AGE TO ADOPT A CHILD?**

The Adoption Act 1955 states that, except in special circumstances, one of the applicants must have reached 25 years of age and be at least 21 years older than the child. There is no upper age limit set by law but your age will be taken into account when an assessment is being made of your suitability to adopt a child. It is important to think ahead about this. A couple in their late forties and early fifties may be able to give good care to an infant, but are likely to find difficulty, in their sixties, in keeping up with an active teenager. They are also likely, by then, to be on a reduced income just at a time when their child's education and upkeep are at their most costly stage.

ARE YOU BOTH IN GOOD HEALTH?

Your health, like your age, is important to a child's security, to give him at least a normal chance that he will have parents for as long as he needs them. There is nothing rigid about the requirements, but if you do have a health problem it is best to discuss this with the social worker.

● ARE YOU FINANCIALLY ABLE TO SUPPORT A CHILD?

The ability to maintain a child adequately, while not the most important requirement, must also be considered.

- HAVE YOU SUFFICIENT ACCOMMODATION ?

You will most probably have thought of this; but the question is important not only for now, but also for considering the needs of a growing child.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR MARRIAGE TO BE A HAPPY AND STABLE ONE?

This question may astound you but it is a matter of obvious importance to an incoming member of the family that you are happily married and that you are well enough adjusted to each other. Things don't have to be perfect (they seldom are), but adoption will not save a marriage which is drifting apart and it is unfair to the child concerned to use him for such a purpose.

- **WOULD YOUR RELATIVES ACCEPT AN ADOPTED CHILD?**

The love of grandparents, aunts, and uncles can be of great importance to a child and to you.

- CAN YOU ACCEPT THE DISRUPTION OF FAMILY ROUTINES THAT A CHILD WOULD BRING?**

Adjusting to the needs and demands of a child will inevitably affect the routines of people who are not used to these.

If you do have other children, it is wise to consider their reactions to the possibility of having another brother or sister.

- **ARE YOU THINKING OF ADOPTING A CHILD AS A COMPANION FOR YOUR OWN CHILDREN?**

If it is simply for this purpose there could be dangers in this for the adopted child unless he is accepted for himself.

- **MIGHT YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT YOUR ADOPTED CHILD BE AFFECTED IF YOU LATER FOUND YOURSELVES ABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN ?**

Sometimes people who adopt, later find they are able to have children. This could cause their feelings towards their adopted child or children to change.

- **DOES IT BOTHER YOU THAT THE CHILD YOU MIGHT ADOPT IS LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK?**

As most children available for adoption in New Zealand are born out of wedlock, your feelings about this are relevant.

- **HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN THIS TO THE CHILD?**

This is an important question to discuss between yourselves and with the social worker.

- **WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT TELLING A CHILD THE FACTS OF HIS ADOPTION ?**

The social worker will want to discuss this with you. These and other important aspects of adoption will be discussed with you during your interview. Please feel free to raise any matters you wish with the social worker.

*Pamphlet No. 2 in a series
Prepared and Distributed
by the Child Welfare Division
of the Department of Education*

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A. R. SHEARER, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND—1971

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